



The **Springfield District Report**

Elaine McConnell
Springfield District
Supervisor



Spring, 2003

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Message From Elaine McConnell

As many of you may know, the Board of Supervisors passed the FY 2004 budget on Monday, the 28th of April. This has been an extraordinarily difficult year for the Board as we have tried to balance vital community needs while lowering the residential real estate tax. Tax revenues from commercial properties, the state sales tax and county investments were all down significantly-- plus the State reduced its support by almost \$53 million dollars. All county departments were cut back and no new programs were initiated by the Board or County staff.

The Board of Supervisors understands and shares our citizens' concerns about the increase in tax assessments on residential property. Fair market assessments are mandated by state law on a yearly basis. We also know residential properties in Fairfax County have soared to all time highs, making it wonderful if one counts the amount the home investment has increased, but much less appealing if one has to pay market based taxes on the property.

I voted to approve the FY 2004 budget because I had worked hard for a five cent reduction in the tax rate. I also had worked to gain an additional 52 police officers I considered vital for the protection of Fairfax County citizens, particularly given the present terrorist threat. I realize Fairfax County continues to be a target area and we need full strength police and fire departments in the event we have another incident.

Virginia is a Dillon Rule state; therefore, local governing Boards in the Commonwealth have little or no authority to diversify revenue streams, e.g., tobacco or transient occupancy taxes without specific General Assembly approval. This means the bulk of County tax revenue (59%) comes through residential and commercial real estate taxes. In addition, we receive from Richmond only 19 cents of each state income tax dollar collected in the County.

Those who simplistically ask for reductions, conveniently never define rationally what or where the reductions should be made. For example, 53.1% of the FY 2004 budget supports our school system, one of the top

(Continued on page 2)

ten public school systems in the United States. Another 12.3% is directed toward public safety, 11.8% toward human services and 3.8% to debt reduction. Those who advocate a reduction in County staff should be reminded that between fiscal years 1991 and 2004, while staffing increased by only 90 positions or 0.8%, the County's population increased by 200,548 or approximately 24%. During this same period, in order to respond to citizens' requests for services, 150 new facilities were opened or expanded, including fire stations, libraries, School Age Child Care (SACC) Centers, as well as many other types of direct service facilities.

We have been able to provide the citizens of Fairfax County with a quality of life almost unmatched in the United States. Our citizens simply do not consider services to be gold plated when they support a superb school system, a police department consistently ranked in the top ten nationally, a fire service providing a six minute emergency response time, and libraries and human services that are models for the rest of the country. These are precisely the reasons they have moved to Fairfax County.

If the tax rate were to be reduced to 76 cents per \$100 the County budget would be reduced by \$560 million dollars per year. A reduction of this type is so draconian it would require school closures, a reduction of 5,000 teachers, and an increase class sizes by 50%. Nor does the carnage stop there, we would also be forced to release 470 fire and rescue personnel, close 7 of the 35 fire stations presently open, reduce the police department by 425 officers, close 7 libraries and 6 of 12 community centers. In my humble opinion, those who advocate this public policy course are not acting responsibly.

If we were to limit or cap our real estate assessments to 5% per year, \$90 to \$100 million dollars would be lost. If we divide the loss proportionally, the school budget would be reduced by \$43 million dollars and public safety by \$12 million dollars. In all probability we would jeopardize our AAA bond rating and our resulting debt service would be severely limited, i.e., no new schools,

fire stations or other needed facilities could be built.

I bring these issues to your attention because this course of action is precisely what is being proposed by some local candidates for public office. The thought of lower taxes is always initially appealing to all of us until the impacts are factored in. I can assure you, that as your supervisor, I am constantly looking for innovative ways to save tax dollars while maintaining the level of services you have come to expect.

The next several years will be challenging for those in public office as we continue to grapple with an uncertain economy. It is precisely because Fairfax County is fiscally sound that we will be able to weather the storm once again—just as we did in 1990. As of this moment, we have 18.5 million square feet of available office space out of a total inventory of approximately 100 million square feet. If we continue to work hard and fill this vacant space with good companies, not only will we generate jobs for our citizens but we will also be able to relieve the residential tax burden as well. If we can work through our state legislators to gain additional revenue back on every dollar and if the General Assembly will legislate to give local boards greater flexibility to diversify local tax structures, we can levy acceptable taxes to provide some additional homeowner tax relief while maintaining the quality of life we all enjoy in this great County.

Make no mistake; there are no short cuts, no free rides, and no simple answers to our issues. The United States is facing challenging times in almost all of our state and local governments—it is a national, not a partisan phenomenon. It will take all of us working together to make it through this and I am trying my best as your supervisor to bring judgment and leadership to the situation. Your suggestions are always welcome!



Elaine McConnell
Supervisor
Springfield District

Budget News



Fiscal Year 2004 (FY2004) Budget Update

On the 24th of February 2003, the Fairfax County Executive provided the Board of Supervisors with their first view of the FY 2004 budget. As indicated by the County Executive the budget (1) Supported Board priorities while identifying program reassessments, reorganizations and redesign opportunities (2) Incorporated a real estate tax reduction for a 2nd consecutive year (3) Included revenue enhancements and fee increases and (4) Required reductions in nearly all County agencies.

Of particular concern and note to Fairfax

County homeowners was the third consecutive year of double digit residential real estate tax assessment increases. This is a reflection of the continuing strong housing market driven by record low mortgage rates throughout the region. The County Executive also noted the continuance of a disturbing trend in that 59.1% of the total general fund revenues are being generated by real estate—compared to 50.7% in FY2001. This trend is driven by two specific factors, first, the aforementioned increase in the value of homes, and second, the continuing weakness in the commercial real estate market. For example, in FY 1990 the commercial/industrial percentage of the total real estate base was 26.6%, in FY 2004 the percentage is estimated to be 19.14%. This decrease is reflective of the 16.5 million square feet of empty office space in the total County inventory of 99.7 million square feet.

In addition to the issues with regard to commercial real estate in the County, over the past three years Virginia State aid has decreased by \$53.87 million dollars, putting significant stress on the funding of our public schools. At the same time this decrease in state aid was occurring (1) the interest gained from the County's investment portfolio decreased from \$56.3 million to \$13.4 million, and (2) Sales tax revenue decreased from \$133.5 million to \$126.2 million.

"I am deeply concerned with the increasing tax burden being placed on the homeowners of Fairfax County. Many of our residents are being forced out of the county because of the increases in their real estate tax bill. We must provide relief by reducing the tax rate to help offset the assessment increases."

—Supervisor Elaine McConnell

Schools continue to be the number one priority of the Board of Supervisors. The proposed transfer to the school system for both school operating and school debt service totals \$1.36 billion dollars, which represents 52.7% of total County disbursements. The \$1.24 billion transfer for school operations is a 6.03% increase over the FY 2003 budget.

The schools have asked for an increase of 6.3% to fund school operations, a difference of only \$3.0 million from the County Executive's proposal.

The biggest issues for the County moving forward are a diversification of the revenue stream to take some pressure off individual homeowners and a very hard look at priorities, i.e., what can be funded as we move forward.

For further information on the budget, contact the Department of Management and Budget's [website](#).

Land Use News

Springfield District Fairfax Center Land Use Committee Update

The following is the status of the applications reviewed by the Land Use Committee this calendar year. Please note the link will provide the full set of meeting minutes and decisions.

Fair Oaks Child Development Center SE 2002-SP-025

[Recommended for approval on 2/4/03](#)

Planning Commission Hearing: 5/1/03

Board of Supervisors Hearing: TBD

Magic Moments Childrens Centre Inc. SE 2002-SP-093

[Denied recommendation for approval on 2/4/03](#)

Planning Commission Hearing: Deferred

Board of Supervisors Hearing: N/A

Christopher Companies RZ-2002-SP-033

[Recommended for approval on 1/14/03](#)

Planning Commission Approved 4/2/03

Board of Supervisors Hearing: 5/5/03

Kustom Kastles L.L.C. PCA/FDPA 1999-SU-043

[Recommended with conditions on 2/4/03](#)

Planning Commission Approved 4/3/03

Board of Supervisors Hearing: 5/5/03

11725 Lee Hwy. L.L.P. SE 2002-SP-048

[Recommended with conditions on 3/4/03](#)

Planning Commission Hearing: 6/11/03

Board of Supervisors Hearing: TBD

Monument Place Out-Of-Turn Plan Amendment OTPA SO2-II-F1

[Recommended with conditions on 4/1/03](#)

Planning Commission Approved 4/24/03

Board of Supervisors Hearing: 5/19/03

Springfield District Fairfax Center Land Use Committee Schedule

The Land Use Committee will review the following applications at the times indicated below.*

Please contact Supervisor McConnell's office at (703) 324-2500 to confirm. Please visit the Land Use [website](#) for a complete schedule.

Fairfax County Family Shelter—Date TBD

Location: Near the intersection of Lee Hwy. and Stringfellow Rd. (immediately west of Meadows Farms Nursery)

Tax Map Parcel 55-3 ((1)) 27A1 and 27B

Description: Fairfax County is proposing to construct a family shelter for parents with infant and elementary school-age children. The shelter will be staffed on a 24/7 basis and numerous services including transportation will be provided to the clientele with the objective of getting them back into traditional housing.

Planning Commission Hearing: Date TBD

Camden USA, Inc. (Monument Place) September 2, 2003

PCA/FDPA-84-P-101-3

Location: N.E. quadrant of the intersection of Monument Dr. and Fair Lakes Pkwy.

Tax Map Parcel 55-3 ((1)) 27A1 and 27B

Description: 372 multi-family rental apartments & 3000 sq. ft. retail.

Planning Commission Hearing: 9/24/03

Board of Supervisors Hearing: 9/29/03

** Land use committee meetings have not been scheduled for May, June, July, or August. Please consult Supervisor McConnell's office at (703) 324-2500 for further information about the schedule.*

Transportation News

First “Yield To Pedestrians” Safety Signs Installed

Fairfax County officials participated in a ceremony on April 15 to install Fairfax County's first "Yield to Pedestrians in Crosswalk \$100-\$500 Violation Fine" signs which cite the newly increased fine for non-compliance with the law in these specially marked intersections. Failure to yield to pedestrians in crosswalks has long been a violation, however the increased fine of up to \$500 per violation was authorized by the Virginia General Assembly last year for Fairfax County after the county pushed for this as part of its legislative program. Throughout the Washington Metropolitan area in the last year there

More than 300 pedestrians are injured and 15 killed in automobile related incidents annually in Fairfax County. Tragically, this could be prevented by increasing the practice of properly crossing the street and improving driver awareness of the rights and responsibilities of pedestrians.

has been a regional effort to improve awareness on the part of drivers and pedestrians about pedestrian safety issues and to focus on drivers who violate these laws. Drivers who see a sign that reminds them about the increased penalty and are aware of the required court appearance are likely to think twice about speeding through crosswalks, making it safer for pedestrians to cross the street.

These signs will be installed at intersections throughout the county over the next few years. Signs were installed at 11 intersections during the week of April 15 and transportation officials anticipate installing signs at possibly 75 more intersections this spring. The "Yield to Pedestrian" safety sign program is part of a comprehensive program of pedestrian safety initiatives that Fairfax County is undertaking.

Springfield District Intersections That Will Have The “Yield To Pedestrians” Safety Signs Installed

The first two signs in the Springfield District will be installed by Memorial Day:

- Old Keene Mill Rd. & Lee Chapel Rd.
- Rolling Rd. & Tuttle Rd.

The next 10 signs will be installed this Fall:

- Braddock Rd. & Fairfax County Pkwy. (northbound ramp)
- Braddock Rd. & Fairfax County Pkwy. (southbound ramp)
- Fairfax County Pkwy. & Burke Center Pkwy.
- Fairfax County Pkwy. & Whitler's Creek Dr.
- Hoos Rd. & Fairfax County Pkwy. (southbound ramp)
- Ox Rd. & Burke Center Pkwy
- Ox Rd. & Fairfax County Pkwy. (southbound ramp/ Robert Carter Rd.)
- Pohick Rd. & Fairfax County Pkwy. (southbound ramp)
- Rolling Rd. & Franconia-Springfield Pkwy. (eastbound ramp)

For more information about pedestrian safety issues in Fairfax County, please call Chris Wells, pedestrian program manager, (703) 324-1100, or Mimi Murray, pedestrian program planner, (703) 324-1436, TTY (703) 324-1102.

County-Wide News

Fairfax County Water Authority Flushes Water Mains

Each spring the Fairfax County Water Authority flushes out its water mains by opening fire hydrants and allowing them to flow freely for a short period of time. The flushing cleans out sediment and allows routine maintenance of the more than 20,000 fire hydrants in the Fairfax County service area. Flushing of the mains normally occurs at night between 11 pm and 5 am, from April until late June. Flushing may result in some discoloration and the presence of sediment in the water. These conditions are not harmful, and should be of short duration.

During this period of time, a slight change is made in the water treatment process to facilitate an effective flushing program. Throughout the year, chloramines, or combined chlorine, is added to the water as the primary disinfectant. During the spring flushing program, chlorine is added in an uncombined state, commonly referred to as free chlorine. Free chlorine is somewhat more volatile than combined, providing exceptional availability to react with sediments suspended during flushing. The Authority will use free chlorine as the primary disinfectant from April 4, 2003 to on or about June 27, 2003. Depending on the location within the distribution system and usage patterns, it could take up to a week for drinking water to transition from combined to free chlorine at the beginning of April, or from free chlorine to combined chlorine at the end of June.

Customers may notice a chlorine taste and odor in their drinking water while free chlorine is utilized. If someone is especially sensitive to the taste and odor of chlorine, keeping an open container of drinking water in the refrigerator is advisable. This will enable the chlorine to dissipate thus reducing the chlorine taste. Remember – drinking water has a shelf life! Change out the water in the refrigerated container weekly.

For further information, contact the Water Authority at (703) 698-5600.

Environmental Quality Advisory Council Seeks High School Applicants To Serve As Student Member

The Environmental Quality Advisory Council (EQAC) of Fairfax County is seeking applications from high school students who are interested in serving on the council as a student member from July 2003 through June 2004. As a member of the Environmental Quality Advisory Council, students have a unique opportunity to be involved in the process of making decisions and recommendations that impact the environment in Fairfax County. It is a great opportunity for growth and hands-on education.

EQAC's chief function is to make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors for improving the county's efforts in environmental protection and enhancement. During monthly meetings, issues such as hazardous materials, water quality, air quality, land use, noise, solid waste, ecological resources, deer management, visual pollution and light pollution are investigated. In addition, EQAC holds a public hearing each year to obtain citizen input on issues of environmental concern and submits an "Annual Report on the Environment" to the Board of Supervisors.

Students who are presently sophomores or juniors in good standing in Fairfax County schools, who are residents of Fairfax County or the towns of Clifton, Herndon or Vienna and who would be interested in serving as EQAC's student member in the upcoming school year should apply. Home-schooled students are also encouraged to apply. Applications must be postmarked by May 9, 2003.

Applications are available from the science department chair, guidance counselor, social studies chair or principal of each public, private or parochial school in Fairfax County. Interested students may also contact Noel Kaplan of the Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning at (703) 324-1210, TTY 711 (Virginia Relay Center), or send an [e-mail](#) for more information or applications.

Further information about EQAC is on their [website](#).

Other News & Commentary

Supervisor McConnell Prepares For Move To New Government Center Office

Good News! We are preparing to move into our newly renovated offices in the West Springfield Government Center at 6140 Rolling Road in Springfield within the next 60 days. This is a long anticipated move for our police and fire personnel who have been working under cramped conditions in the outdated facility. The police were actually using jail cells for offices because of space limitations with no separate locker rooms for men and women officers.

The old building had many significant problems including failing or inadequate air conditioning and heating systems, asbestos, and no Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) approved restrooms.

I know we will enjoy our new space in the supervisor's office which will have a small conference room and our first new furniture in 19 years.

Our citizens voted some time ago via a bond referendum (1998) to support these vital improvements. The station staff, both fire and police, have waited a very long time for the improvements needed.

We thank all of you who voted to make it happen.



New Government Center on Rolling Road, West Springfield

“Whom Shall I Send?”

In a Pentagon corridor, close to the Secretary of Defense's office, there used to hang a painting, one that has always been a favorite of mine. It is a painting of a military family, bowing in prayer, at a church altar. The inscription below the painting is from Isaiah, I believe it is Chapter 6, Verse 8 “Whom shall I send, who will go for us, here am I, send me.”

I am reminded of this painting and all it signifies as we once again approach Memorial Day. As you know, Memorial Day is the traditional start of summer, but even more importantly, it is a time for all Americans to reflect and to give thanks to those who have given the last full measure to insure our freedom as a nation. The observance is particularly important this year because of the sacrifices our soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines have made in Afghanistan and Iraq, bringing freedom to those who had for so long been oppressed.

To all of you who have served and to your families who know of your sacrifice and courage, we say “thank you” for all you have given. We as a nation are much the better for it and we will never forget.

*Norman Byers
Chief-Of-Staff
Supervisor McConnell's Office*

Supervisor McConnell Nominates Springfield District Lord and Lady Fairfax

Congratulations to **Emerson Cale** of the Greenbriar Civic Association and **Pamela Latt**, Centreville High School Principal and Clifton resident on their nomination of Lord and Lady Fairfax.

The Lord and Lady Fairfax Awards are one of the top awards given out by Fairfax County to residents from each Supervisor District. Supervisors select those who “have made significant contributions to the well being of their District through service in voluntary organizations, government, business, the arts, or by an act of heroism”. Though a meager gesture of appreciation, the annual title of Lord and Lady Fairfax is a fitting title for the exemplary altruism recipients have endlessly pursued.

Other News

Primary—Vote June 10, 2003

What Offices Am I Voting For?

State Senate 32nd District
State Senate 34th District
State Delegate 49th District
Sheriff
County Supervisor Chairman
Springfield District Supervisor



Who Are The Candidates?

Go to the Electoral Board and General Registrar's [website](#) or call (703) 222-0776.

Where Do I Vote?

The polls are open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. If you have moved or you don't know where to vote, please contact the Electoral Board and General Registrar at (703) 222-0776.

Do I need to Bring I.D.?

Yes. Please remember that no registered voter can be denied the right to vote, but you are now required to show identification at the polls in accordance with a law passed by the General Assembly in 2000. Acceptable forms of I.D. include a Virginia Voter Information Card, a Virginia driver's license or special identification card issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles, a valid United States passport, a Military ID card, an employer-issued photo ID card or a Social Security card. A voter who fails to bring acceptable ID to the polls may still vote after certifying, under oath, his/her correct name and address.

First Inaugural Springfield District **Children's Fair**

Join us at **Burke Lake Park on May 3** from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. for rides, food, music and the Burke Volunteer Fire Department's Safe Kids Day. WMZQ will be providing lemonade, tea, and music. In addition to performances by school groups and police, events include a Golf Tournament and a Race Around Burke Lake. To register for either event, call Nancy McDonnell at (703) 324-2500 or send her an [e-mail](#). Read the [Press Release](#).

Get Ready for Celebrate Fairfax! 2003

The 22nd annual Celebrate Fairfax!*, scheduled for June 6-8 at the Fairfax County Government Center, is Northern Virginia's music, entertainment and high-tech festival. In addition to 120 performances on eight stages, the festival boasts nightly fireworks, an arts & crafts market, virtual reality attractions, an award-winning SciTech Center, hundreds of business and non-profit exhibits, children's and family programs, and more than 40 vendors featuring your favorite traditional festival and international food selections! New programs include the following:

- a new **Second Stage** for opening acts featuring late-night performances,
- **Hands-On-History** area showcasing local historical societies and the Virginia Room of the Fairfax County Public Libraries; the Estate of George Washington, Mount Vernon, will be bringing interactive Colonial-era activities, including a sheep-shearing and wool-making demonstration, grain processing, interactive storytellers, and games for children,
- **Korean heritage and culture events**—traditional Korean wedding, crafts, dance, fashion shows, and Tai Kwon Do demonstrations,
- a **historic quilt show**, and
- a virtual **Battle of the Bands** competition is planned for May 2003, in which local bands will vie for a spot on the festival bill.

Tickets are available at the gates. Discount tickets will be available at the Fairfax area Multiplex Cinemas. Discount tickets and special ticket packages (with parking) will be available on the festival's web site in May.

Want to volunteer? Contact Sean Forman at (703) 324-5392 or at sean@celebratefairfax.com for further information.

*Celebrate Fairfax! is produced by Celebrate Fairfax, Inc. (CFI), a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. For further information, please visit www.celebratefairfax.com.



Need A Speaker At Your Next Association Meeting?

If you would like Supervisor McConnell to be your guest speaker at your next homeowner or civic association meeting, please contact [Dianne Peikin](#) at (703) 451-8873 to make arrangements. Thank You!

For our Homeowner Associations . . .

Your Community, Your Call

continued by popular request . . .

“Assessments, Penalties, and Collections”

May 13, 2003

Cable Channel 16

7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

For further information call [Cal Wagner](#), Fairfax County's Community Liaison, at (703) 324-5977

CONTACT US

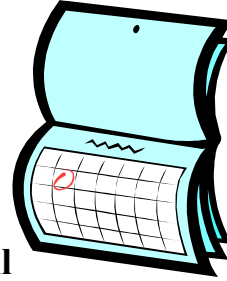
The *Springfield District Report* is distributed electronically in Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall.

If you are interested in receiving your free copy of the *Springfield District Report*, please send us an [e-mail](#). In the subject line of the e-mail, please type “subscribe.” In the body of the e-mail, please include your name, address, and phone number (optional).

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2003 Calendar Of Events



April

- 1 [Land Use Committee Meeting](#)**
- 7 *Board of Supervisors Meeting**
- 8, 9 *Board of Supervisors Meeting* -*
Budget Public Hearings
- 21 *Board of Supervisors Meeting* -*
Budget Mark-Up
- 28 *Board of Supervisors Meeting**

May

- 3 [Children's Fair](#)
- 5 *Board of Supervisors Meeting**
- 10 *Children's Fair—Rain Date*
- 19 *Board of Supervisors Meeting**
- 26 *Memorial Day—Holiday*

June

- 2 *Board of Supervisors Meeting**
- 6-8 [Celebrate Fairfax](#)
- 10 [Election Primary](#)
- 16 *Board of Supervisors Meeting**

July

- 4 *Independence Day—Holiday*
- 7 *Board of Supervisors Meeting**
- 21 *Board of Supervisors Meeting**

**The Board of Supervisors meets at 9:00 a.m. in the Board Auditorium at 12000 Government Center Parkway*

***The Land Use Committee meets at 7:00 p.m. in the Government Center at 12000 Government Center Parkway*